

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. ***PICON is not served when only one side of an issue is presented. De-regulation in the 1980's eliminated one of the safeguards against this type of domination. The loss of the Fairness Doctrine was shameful. Just as critical in this particular issue, Sinclair is taking advantage of the exceptions under the Equal Time Clause. This documentary may be a bona fide news event, and provide crucial interesting information. But presentation of this clearly biased film, which will not be balanced by either a neutral or pro-Kerry film, will not provide viewers with a chance to hear a different point of view. ***when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.